



# How to revise for English and English Literature

EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES TO BOOST STUDENT  
PERFORMANCE

# Understanding the GCSE exam

## AQA GCSE English Language (8700)

There are **two papers**, each lasting **1 hour 45 minutes**:

English Language Paper 1: Creative Reading and Writing	English Language Paper 2: Writers' viewpoints and perspectives.
<p><b>Section A (Reading):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Q1</i>: Now a <b>multiple-choice</b> question.</li><li>• <i>Q2–Q4</i>: Focus on language, structure, and evaluation.</li></ul> <p><b>Section B (Writing):</b></p> <p><i>Q5</i>: Students choose between a <b>description</b> or a <b>narrative opening</b> (not a full story). They're encouraged to use imagination beyond the image prompt.</p>	<p><b>Section A (Reading):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Q1–Q4</i>: Focus on summarising, comparing, and analysing methods. Wording has been clarified.</li><li>• <b>Section B (Writing):</b></li><li>• <i>Q5</i>: Write a persuasive or discursive piece.</li></ul>

# Understanding the GCSE exam

## AQA GCSE English Literature (8702)

There are **two papers**. **Paper 1 is 1h45min. Paper 2 is 2h 15mins.**

English Literature Paper 1: Shakespeare and the 19th Century Novel	English Literature Paper 2: Modern texts and poetry
<p>Students should spend about 50 minutes answering each question.</p> <p><b><u>They have to answer:</u></b></p> <p>1 question on Romeo and Juliet. (34 marks)</p> <p>1 question on A Christmas Carol. (30 marks)</p>	<p><b><u>Section A: Modern prose: An Inspector Calls.</u></b> Marks: 34 (including 4 for SPaG) Time: 45 minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Planning: 5 minutes</li><li>• Writing: 40 minutes</li></ul> <p><b><u>Poetry Anthology: Power and Conflict</u></b> Marks: 30 Time: 45 minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Planning/Annotation: 5 minutes</li><li>• Writing: 40 minutes</li></ul> <p><b><u>Section C: Unseen Poetry</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Part 1 (Analysis of one poem): 24 marks → 30 minutes</li><li>• Part 2 (Comparison with second poem): 8 marks → 10–15 minutes</li></ul>

# Key dates:

- **English Language Paper 1: Thursday 21 May 2026 (Morning)**
- **English Literature Paper 2: Friday 5 June 2026 (Morning)**
  
- **English Literature Paper 1: Monday 11 May 2026 (Morning)**
- **English Language Paper 2: Tuesday 19 May 2026 (Morning)**

# Recommended revision resources

- [AQA GCSE \(9-1\) English Revision - PMT](#)
- [Last Minute Literature RevisionPod – GCSE English RevisionPod – Podcast – Podtail](#)
- [GCSE English Language - AQA - BBC Bitesize](#)
- [GCSEPod](#)
- [mr bruff - YouTube](#)

# At home, students need to be:

- Re-reading each of the exam texts. They need to know these inside out.  
**(An Inspector Calls, A Christmas Carol, Romeo and Juliet)**
- Support at the right time: Use the long-term plan to inform discussions at home; watch the film versions of the texts together. Listen to audio books or pod casts in the car and discuss.
- Regularly revisiting the Power and Conflict poetry anthology. Produce Cornell notes/flashcards/watch GCSE pod/Youtube and add to current annotations.

# At home, students need to be:

- Homework tasks every week on Classcharts – This is revision and we have planned this out for them. Complete these tasks weekly
- Discussing current affairs/reading the news/reading non-fiction. Print off the texts from the past papers. Ask students to make a note of key vocabulary/summarise the extract.
- Vocabulary boosting – Being precise.

# Things to avoid:

- Mr Everything English – He is a popular YouTube/TikTok poster. He has been criticised multiple times in the exam reports from AQA for trying to give students 'quick wins'.
- These will not help them achieve grades.

# What we offer in school to support

- Wednesday lunch time drop in session in Room 13: hard copies of homework available, past papers and support on hand for missed learning/difficult topics.
- Period 6 available on Thursday after school from 3.15 until 4pm
- We're all here to help and happy to make time if someone asks!

# Activities to try out

- 1) Flashcard preparation: Prepare flashcards for key quotations from the literature texts
- 2) Cornell notes: Use these whilst watching GCSE pod videos
- 3) Using past papers effectively: Have a go at a question and use AI to make it and offer feedback

# How can you help at home?

- Reading culture in the home
  - -Normalise reading
  - -Set a good example (20 minutes a day)
  - -Carry on reading to them
  - -Talk about books
  - -Read what they're reading
  - -Let them choose what they like, but...
  - -...encourage new genres, subjects, authors

# Sustained reading

	Child A	Child B	Child C
Reading per day	20 minutes	5 minutes	1 minute
Time per school year	3600 minutes	900 minutes	180 minutes
Words per school year	1,800,000	282,000	8,000
Percentile of test scores	90 <sup>th</sup>	50 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>

